## CDC Vital Signs Preventing Prescription Drug Overdose

Every day, 46 people in the U.S. die from an overdose of prescription opioid painkillers. A surge in opioid prescribing is a key driver of the increase in overdoses, but prescribing varies across the country. Health care providers in some states prescribe painkillers almost three times as often as providers in other states. More can be done to make painkiller prescribing safer and help prevent overdoses. States can increase the use of prescription drug monitoring programs, which are state-run databases that track prescriptions for painkillers and can help find problems in overprescribing. Health care providers can try options that don't involve opioid painkillers. They can also identify patients who are misusing painkillers and get them into treatment for substance abuse. Everyone can help prevent overdoses by not taking painkillers more often than prescribed and by not selling or sharing prescription drugs.

To learn more, visit cdc.gov/vitalsigns.